** Next Project **

ZORK ZERO

Genre: Fantasy Rating: probably Standard
System: definitely Extended Estimated Development Time: 10-12 months
As the name implies, a prequel to the Zork trilogy. It would be set in the Great Underground Empire, and covering a long period of time, from the end of the reign of Dimwit Flathead in 789 through the fall of the GUE in 883, and possibly through 948 (the year of the Zork trilogy). It would almost certainly end "west of a white house." There would be some story, probably about as much as Enchanter or Sorcerer. For the most part, though, it would be an intensely puzzle-oriented game with a huge geography.

STATIONFALL

Genre: Science Fiction Rating: Standard or Advanced
System: Classic Estimated Development Time: 8 months
The long-awaited sequel to Planetfall. Since your promotion to Lieutenant First Class in the Stellar Patrol of the Third Galactic Union following a commendable job on Resida five years ago, you have failed to advance your rank or career at all. Elevation to LFC has meant that your routine of constant mopping drudgery has been replaced by a routine of constant paperwork drudgery, and your harsh commanding officer Ensign Blather has been replaced by the bubbleheaded and bureaucratic Captain Measle. Your latest assignment: to shuttle over to Station Alpha Beta Epsilon Gamma Omega 78-C-985 Sector Delta Delta VH-98, in order to pick up a crate of new shuttle fuel requisition form requistion forms. You stop by the robot pool to pick up a robot aide for the trip ... one familiar figure comes bounding toward you... "Hey, take Floyd! Floyd best robot aide in pool!" After a brief trip, you arrive at the station. It is deserted, your shuttle has stopped working you can't raise your ship, and Floyd has begun to act oddly...

MINUTE MYSTERIES

Genre: Mystery Rating: probably Standard or mixed
System: definitely Extended Estimated Development Time: 12 months
Four mini-mysteries, each set in the same locale, but during different periods of time. I can see one set during the 1910's, one during WWII, one during the present, and one at some point in the next century. For the location, I'm leaning toward a small cruise ship. (Naturally, I'd have to spend several weeks on cruise ships doing research). Some ideas for the individual mysteries: In one of them, it turns out that you were actually the killer, but are suffering amnesia because of a blow received during a struggle with the victim -- you first think that the blow was inflicted by the murderer! In another, you would be the descendant of a character in one of the previous stories, attempting to prove the innocence of your relative, and getting mixed up in a new murder, and having to solve both. The last story, set in the future, would also have some sci-fi elements.

ATTACK OF THE FREONS (and other stories)

Genre: Science Fiction Rating: probably Advanced
System: could go either way Estimated Development Time: 10 months
This is based on a fairly long short story I wrote a few years ago. It would be a game with a good blend of story and puzzle elements. There would be 3 story lines, each one based on a science fiction cliche -- time travel, a mad scientist, and invasion from outer space. However, all three stories, which at first seem totally independent, end up tying together. I won't say how; even the fact that they do at all should be kept top secret.

BLAZING PARSERS

Genre: Tales of Adventure Rating: probably Standard
System: probably Classic Estimated Development Time: 8-9 months
The western comedy that Jerry started. A lot of the basic design and a little bit of the implementation is already done. If you don't recall, the basic story line is a spaghetti western with all the usual characters and situations, and the basic gag is that there are several parsers with different personalities and degrees of competency that are constantly wandering "in" and "out" of the game. Another gag revolves around Mr. Smith, who can imitate nearly anything: "There is a bowling ball here." TAKE BOWLING BALL. "Oops! It's only Mr. Smith, doing his famous bowling ball imitation." Or... "President Rutherford B. Hayes is at the bar." PRESIDENT HAYES, HOWDY. "As you begin speaking, you realize that it isn't President Rutherford B. Hayes after all, but merely Mr. Smith, doing his rather awesome President Rutherford B. Hayes imitation."

INTERACTIVE BIBLE

Genre: Fantasy? TOA? Rating: probably Standard
System: could go either way Estimated Development Time: 8-10 months
Imagine the ad campaign: "Have you always thought that God screwed it up? Try it yourself!" The opening room: VOID. Suggested first moves LET THERE BE LIGHT, CREATE WORLD. Imagine the response to EXAMINE LIGHT: You see that it is good. As the "story" progresses, you would become other characters. As Adam, you might decide to shun the serpent's apple, stay in Eden and die of boredom; as Noah, you could refuse to build the ark and drown in the Flood, or forget to bring along two horses, changing the entire shape of human history. The writing would naturally all be in shalts and begats and haths.

LEATHER GODESSES OF PHOBOS

Genre: Sci-Fi/Humor/Adult Rating: probably Standard
System: probably Classic Estimated Development Time: 8 months
A titillating romp through universe to save earth from the evil characters of the title. Featuring lots of anachronistic sword fights aboard interstellar hyperspace battle cruisers, seduction of planetary overlords, encounters with bizarre aliens who's main motives always seem to be to tear clothes off humans. Very soft-core; see Barbarella for an example.

"THE VIABLE IDEA"

Genre: Mixed/Experimental Rating: probably Standard or Mixed
System: could go either way Estimated Development Time: 6 months

An idea I originally came up with as a way to produce a game in much less time than could normally be expected, but which I think is an interesting idea even without that need. Basically, one person (the Editor) designs a tiny "piece" of a game -- a couple of rooms, a few objects with action routines, maybe even a character. Working from this, in complete isolation, five (or so) imps would write a small mini-game (a couple of puzzles, ten to twenty rooms) around that original core. The Editor would be responsible for integrating the five ideas together, blending the code, making sure that there wasn't any gross repetition in the stories, and, of course, fixing bugs. I think that seeing how different people went in different directions from the same starting point would make for an interesting interactive fiction experience.

COLLABORATIONS (?)